

Mayor's Green Ribbon Commission

Meeting notes for March 29, 2005

Location: Starbucks Headquarters

In attendance:

- Mayor Greg Nickels
- Chair, Denis Hayes
- KC Golden
- Dennis McLerran
- Rich Feldman
- Anna Gottlieb
- Michael McGinn
- Kollin Min
- Greg Smith
- Anne Steinmann
- Doug Walker
- John Prescott (for Jorge Carrasco)
- Ben Packard (for Orin Smith)

City Staff: Steve Nicholas, Kim Drury, Marco Lowe, Claudia Arana

Near Term Action items/meeting outcomes:

- **Mayor Nickels asked for GRC members to help recruit cities in support of the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. City staff will follow up with GRC members.**
- **KC Golden asked GRC members to actively help support passage of the Clean Car bill in the legislature as the single best measure to reduce GHG emissions from vehicles**

Welcome and introductions: Ben Packard opened the meeting with a delicious introduction to proper coffee appreciation - aroma and taste. During the round of introductions, several members commented on the value and immediacy of the Commission's work:

- An opportunity to create a legacy, the value of which will become increasingly obvious to the public and other regions
- Climate impacts and health are cross cutting - need to keep that a central focus
- Much work is already done: leverage work of the Clean Air Agency's Climate Protection Advisory Committee just completed in January this year
- Tremendous opportunity to actually implement measures that most other jurisdictions just talk about
- The GRC provides more impetus for the Apollo project, an opportunity to move toward a regional clean energy economy
- Desire to make Seattle a truly emerald city; goal of more LEED buildings, in both public and private sectors

In his opening remarks, Mayor Nickels stated that leadership is needed at the local level because it's not being provided at the national level: the US should have been a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol. Instead, with the help of the GRC, Seattle will meet or exceed the Kyoto target. Mayor Nickels has also launched an initiative to get 141 cities from across the nation to sign on to the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. He also noted that climate protection actions are compatible with the other goals of his administration from Smart Growth to getting the clean car legislation passed to restoring Seattle's urban forest.

Mayor Nickels articulated the charge of the Commission:

- Develop a Seattle Climate Action Plan that implements the spirit and letter of the Kyoto Protocol
- Help communicate the issue and, ultimately, the Action Plan to the community

- Contribute to national momentum by helping recruit cities to join the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement that will be presented at the US Conference of Mayors meeting in June

Co-chair Denis Hayes noted that the caliber of the Commission members and the commitment of the Mayor ensured that the work of the Commission would have impact and follow-through. He also noted that the airport and aircraft are major contributors to the region's emissions; he encouraged Mayor Nickels to add a Port representative to the GRC.

Work plan and charter

Steve Nicholas walked through the GRC charter and work plan, emphasizing that Commission members' time would be respected but that they will be challenged given that a final report is planned by the end of the year. Comments offered were:

- Clarify what is meant by "community based" emissions; better language might be "community-wide" emissions.
- Appreciate that City staff doesn't want to ask too much of us as commission members - but we need to be prepared to spend as much time as it takes. The effort deserves that.
- There are a lot of many, good practical emission reduction strategies, technologies, etc that have been well documented (e.g., the Clean Air Agency's Climate Protection Road Map); the focus of the GRC should be on getting the best of the ideas implemented
- The current focus is on the Kyoto target; however, a little further down the road, for climate stabilization, need to also think beyond 2012 and beyond a 7% target
- Don't wait until the end of the process to think about implementation and communication - build that in upfront.
- Reduced fossil fuel use also translates to other timely messages including national security and building jobs. The Plan should build embrace those concepts in addition to climate issues.
- To make best use of meeting time, need for CRC members to do "homework" between meetings.
- May want to build "tours" into meeting days to demonstrate new, clean energy technology opportunities

Climate Disruption Overview

GRC member KC Golden gave a presentation covering the current science, projected impacts, communication challenges and how local initiatives, such as the Green Ribbon Commission contribute to building awareness and actual greenhouse gas emission reductions. Some of his key points were:

- Climate disruption remains a very difficult communications challenge, in this country especially; in general, the public response is that nothing needs to be done because the government isn't doing anything about it. The "vicious cycle" of denial/confusion leading to inaction can be broken and a "virtuous cycle" can be created through results oriented climate policy that leads to practical, profitable solutions.
- Given the existing levels of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to a different climate is a reality. However, we don't know what we need to adapt to until we stabilize the climate. Thus, we need to remain focused on avoiding emissions.
- The single best way to manage down our emissions is the Clean Car bill in the legislature.